

# WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

**COMMITTEE:**        **SOCIAL SERVICES**

**DATE:**                **AUGUST 22, 2014**

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**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

SUPERVISORS   WESTCOTT  
                      WOOD  
                      SOKOL  
                      FRASIER  
                      STROUGH  
                      VANSELOW  
                      SIMPSON

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

REPRESENTING THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES:

                      MAUREEN SCHMIDT, DEPUTY COMMISSIONER

                      JULIE MONTERO, FISCAL MANAGER

                      DEANNA PARK, DIRECTOR OF COUNTRYSIDE ADULT HOME

                      KEVIN B. GERAGHTY, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

                      PAUL DUSEK, COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

                      JOAN SADY, CLERK OF THE BOARD

SUPERVISORS   BEATY

                      BROCK

                      GIRARD

                      SEEBER

                      TAYLOR

                      GRETCHEN STEFFAN, COUNTY HUMAN RESOURCES DIRECTOR

                      TRAVIS WHITEHEAD, QUEENSBURY RESIDENT

                      DON LEHMAN, *THE POST STAR*

                      SAMANTHA HOGAN, ASSISTANT SECRETARY TO THE CLERK OF THE BOARD

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Mr. Westcott called the meeting of the Social Services Committee to order at 9:30 a.m.

Motion was made by Mr. Strough, seconded by Ms. Wood and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the previous Committee meeting, subject to correction by the Clerk of the Board.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Maureen Schmidt, Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Social Services (DSS), who distributed copies of the DSS Agenda to the Committee members; a copy of the DSS Agenda is on file with the minutes.

Commencing the Agenda review Ms. Schmidt announced Maureen Taylor, Senior Caseworker in the Foster Care/Adoption Unit, had been chosen as the DSS Team Leader for the month of August. She added that Cara Watkins-Irwin, Caseworker in the Adult Protective Services/CASA Unit, had been named the DSS Team Player for the month of August. Ms. Schmidt read aloud the comments from fellow co-workers as to why these ladies were nominated, followed by a round of applause by the Committee. A copy of the comments can be found on file with the minutes.

Continuing with the Agenda review, Ms. Schmidt stated that she had provided copies of the 2015 Budget proposal for the DSS. She advised the budget was a work in progress and noted that if anyone had questions she encouraged them to contact either herself or Julie Montero, Fiscal Manager of the DSS. Mr. Westcott interjected that he had requested the Budget proposal be distributed to the Committee before it was presented to the Budget Committee to allow time to comment, as there was a lot of information to review.

Paul Dusek, County Administrator, pointed out that the proposal presented was a draft budget which would be reviewed by the Budget Team with Ms. Schmidt before it was officially filed with the Budget Committee by the September 5<sup>th</sup> filing deadline. He advised that the Budget Team consisted of himself; Frank Thomas, Budget Officer; Rob Lynch, Fiscal Assistant to the County Administrator; and JoAnn McKinstry, Assistant to the County Administrator. Mr. Dusek explained that upon the official filing with the Budget Committee, the proposal would become the Department's Budget request which would then be subject to review and approval by the Budget Committee before it was eventually included in the 2015 Budget document presented to the Board of Supervisors for approval. He reminded the Committee that in prior years, the departmental budget requests were submitted directly to the Budget Committee; however, he continued, due to the financial situation of the County when he had become the County Administrator they had decided to incorporate a preliminary review by the Budget Team with the respective department head before the request was submitted. Mr. Dusek advised that in this case, Mr. Westcott had taken an additional step to bring the proposal to the Social Services Committee for review. He reiterated that there was a deadline of September 5<sup>th</sup> for submission of all departmental budget requests to the Budget Committee.

Mr. Strough asked why there were two separate budget proposals and Ms. Montero responded that this had been done to show the budgetary impact of the salary rate increases for the Caseworker staff.

Moving on to Agenda Item 7, privilege of the floor was extended to Ms. Montero who reviewed the monthly Overtime and Revenue/Expenditures Reports. She stated that the Overtime Report reflected a decrease in overtime expenses as compared to the same time frame in 2013. Copies of the Reports are on file with the minutes.

Ms. Wood inquired about activity in the Adult Protective Unit, noting that at the start of 2014 there seemed to have been an increase in activity and she was curious as to whether the increase had leveled off during the year. Ms. Schmidt advised the activity had leveled off, but noted that they expected increases going forward as the County's population continued to age.

There being no further DSS business to discuss, privilege of the floor was extended to Deanna Park, Director of Countryside Adult Home, who distributed copies of the Countryside Adult Home Agenda to the Committee members; a copy of the Countryside Agenda is on file with the minutes.

Commencing the Agenda review, Ms. Park presented a request for a transfer of funds in the amount of \$21,000 from Budget Code A.6030 410 (Countryside Adult Home, Supplies) to Budget Code A.6030 810 (Countryside Adult Home, Retirement) to cover retirement costs for the remainder of the year.

Mr. Westcott asked Ms. Park for an explanation as to why this had to be done and she responded it was at the request of the County Treasurer. Mr. Westcott indicated that he intended to question the County Treasurer about the amount of the transfer. Ms. Wood commented that during budget time, estimates were used to determine what retirement costs would be incurred during the ensuing year; however, she added, the estimated amounts budgeted were not always sufficient to cover the actual costs incurred.

Motion was made by Mr. Simpson, seconded by Ms. Wood and carried unanimously to approve the request for a transfer of funds, as outlined above, and to refer same to the Finance Committee. *A copy of the request is on file with the minutes.*

Moving on to Agenda Item 2, Ms. Park presented a request for a transfer of funds in the amount of \$3,000 from Budget Code A.6030 439 (Countryside Adult Home, Misc. Fees & Expenses) to Budget Code A.6030 830 (Countryside Adult Home, Unemployment) to cover unemployment expenses for the remainder of the year.

Motion was made by Ms. Wood, seconded by Mr. Simpson and carried unanimously to approve the request for a transfer of funds, as outlined above, and to refer same to the Finance Committee. *A copy of the request is on file with the minutes.*

Ms. Park advised Agenda Item 3 consisted of a request for renewal of the existing contract with Warrensburg Laundry and Dry Cleaning, Inc. for laundry services for the term commencing August 20, 2014 and terminating August 19, 2016. She noted the cost of the contract would be \$.53/lb, for a total not to exceed \$23,000 for the first year and \$.55/lb, for a total not to exceed \$24,000 for the second year.

Motion was made by Ms. Wood, seconded by Mrs. Frasier and carried unanimously to approve the contract renewal, as outlined above, and the necessary resolution was authorized for the September 19, 2014 Board meeting. *A copy of the resolution request is on file with the minutes.*

Concluding the Agenda review, Ms. Park announced that Countryside Adult Home would be holding their annual family picnic on September 7, 2014 at 11:30 a.m.; she said she would be sending invitations to the Supervisors for this event.

Mr. Westcott announced he had asked Gretchen Steffan, County Human Resources Director, to attend the meeting and provide information with regard to an inquiry made by Supervisor Seeber about the savings or costs associated with positions as they were filled.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Ms. Steffan, who provided copies of a report that pertained to vacancies filled in the DSS Division, listing how those positions were filled and whether there was a true savings or cost; a copy of the report can be found on file with the minutes. She indicated that she had received assistance from support staff in establishing this report and including language that specifically outlined the filling of the vacancies.

Ms. Seeber stated that she had not had time to review the report, as she was informed just that morning by Supervisor Westcott that it would be presented today. She informed the Committee that her concern derived from a discussion regarding requests to fill positions and the projected savings amount. She pointed out a specific line in the report stating that the employee who had vacated the Social Services Investigator #3 position had been making less than the employee hired to fill the position, but noted that the comment line indicated there was a budgetary savings of \$8,967. She stated her concern was whether or not there was an actual savings in this instance, as well as whether this situation was occurring in other Departments. Ms. Seeber noted it appeared that Wanda Smith, Confidential Secretary to the County Administrator, had spent a lot of time compiling information for the report and had done a great job; however, she said, she felt Mrs. Smith was not given the right information to include in the report. Additionally, she advised that Chairman Geraghty had met with Mr. Dusek to discuss changing the Notice to Fill Vacant Position request form to include the actual savings amounts.

Ms. Steffan stated that the Human Resources Department was working on putting together a new, more accurate system for tracking positions. She noted that the current report was full of flaws in that the hire date was taken directly from the resolution request and was not edited in any way to explain inaccuracies. Additionally, she explained that the current hiring process was not standard for every position as although each Union position had a grade attached, many also included "step" provisions that allowed for hiring at higher rates based on experience. Ms. Steffan indicated that there were some higher ranking staff members, such as Ms. Montero, who would benefit from having permissions to access individual staff salaries in the New World system and she felt this access should be allowed in order to include accurate salary information when completing personnel request forms. She concluded that new reports had been established, but there were many more that were needed; she advised each month the Personnel Committee would be provided with a list detailing how vacancies were filled during the previous month to provide a better picture of the actions taking place.

Ms. Montero commented that sometimes DSS positions remained vacant for a very long time, which also contributed to the cost savings; she said these savings should be reflected in the report, but questioned how to include them.

Chairman Geraghty stated he believed that this issue could be resolved by ensuring the proper information was provided on the Notice of Intent to Fill Vacant Position forms presented to the appropriate Committees; he added that in order to do this, better communication between the department heads and Human Resources Department was necessary. Chairman Geraghty commented that the varying longevity pay seemed to be causing a lot of confusion.

As there was no further business to come before the Social Services Committee, on motion made by Mr. Vanselow and seconded by Ms. Wood, Mr. Westcott adjourned the meeting at 9:58 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Samantha Hogan, Assistant Secretary to the Clerk of the Board